

# Meth

**Cooking in a basement near you...**

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# Meth...

- A drug like no other
- “America’s drug”
- Be afraid, be very afraid

# A bit of meth history...

- First synthesized in 1887
- Combat pilots, especially Kamikazes in WWII
- Adolph Hitler
- John F. Kennedy
- 1950's pep pills
- 1980's bikers and Mexican gangs
- Refined recipes in the late 90's brought it back with a vengeance.

# Meth

Truly is  
“America’s  
Drug”

- No smuggling
- No foreign connection
- No months-long to grow
- Completely homemade.  
Ingredients at your local Wal-Mart

# How is it taken?

● Snorted

● Smoked

● Ingested

● Injected\*\*\*

# What does it do?

- Increases the neurotransmitter dopamine into the pleasure centers of the brain (putamen).
- Then, it doesn't allow the breakdown of dopamine.

## *Problemo numero uno...*

- It kills dopamine producing cells in the brain (and serotonin and norepinephrine)
  - Thus, it disables the users ability to find pleasure.
- ....which also explains why psychosis and the neurologic problems ultimately result.

# What kind of drug is it?

Consider this example...

A child runs out into traffic and is struck by a car. Her horrified father runs to help her and finds that she is trapped under the front wheel of the car. He lifts the car off of her.

How can that happen?



# Cuz, meth also works to:

- Prevent the breakdown of catecholamines (adrenaline /epinephrine/ norepi.) in the body.
- So, it's a strong CNS stimulant.
- The high=euphoria, self-confidence, a burst of energy.
- A 3-4 day binge is common.

# Why is it so dangerous?

- Dealers tend to indulge in the product
- The tolerance builds very quickly
- **EXTREMELY** addictive
- There's seldom an "occasional user"

# Why is it so addictive?

- The high is so high
- But the resulting low is so low
  - The only way to escape the low is to get high again.
  - The tolerance builds so quickly.  
*“I can’t get high anymore man...”*

# No other drug is as addictive. None.

Animals, given unlimited access, will  
self administer meth until its toxic  
effects kill them.

-Frances, 1998

***Some sobering cases,  
right in our N. D.  
neighborhoods....***

# Julie, a 23 year old meth addict

- “It turned me into a nympho, two three hours with one, two three hours with another...”
- “I used to smoke it, but before long I was shooting...”
- “I was up 10 or 11 days once, completely cranked, then I crashed...”

# Randy, a 18 year old meth addict

- “We’d go three, four days at a crack, no sleep, no food...”
- “We’d be flat busted after a crank bender and go to the grocery store and eat 2 or 3 bags of Oreos right in the store...”
- “Crank is my whole world, man, I’ve lost everything else...”
- “I can’t get high anymore...”

# “Collateral Damage”

- Suicides
- Mental illness
- Shared needles
- Risky sexual behavior
- Crime
- Violence
- Child neglect and abuse
- Toxic waste dumps and fire and explosion risks
  - 1 out of every 5 labs is discovered because of a fire or explosion.



# The “Tweaker”

- Hyperactivity and nervous agitation
- Paranoia
- Skin picking
- Psychosis
- Destructive behavior

# Danger!!

- Sudden death is possible.
- Cardiac arrhythmias and an acute coronary syndrome.
- High doses can cause irreversible CNS damage.
- Acute choreoathetoid disorder.
- Extreme hypertension leading to stroke.

# Danger!!

- Acute toxic psychosis complete with hallucinations and extreme paranoia is common.
- Destructive behavior is common.
- Extreme hyperpyrexia (fever)...heat stroke.
- Co-ingesting other drugs to help “bring them down” or “detox” themselves is common.

# A drug like no other...

- Meth paranoia
- Bugs crawling under their skin  
(*aka formication*)
- Stereotypical mannerisms common

# Examples: Idiosyncrasies:

- Tics
- Repetitive activities like: shoe tying, lip smacking
- Fear of tinfoil or small baggies in the recovering addict

**Where meth thrives,  
so does violence  
and crime.**

*Some examples...*

# Treating The Meth Addict:

- Extremely difficult
- Relapse is very common
- In-patient treatment is virtually unavailable
- Addiction is almost always in excess of one year

# Managing Acute Meth Intox:

- Treat the OD: A B C D E, etc.
- Quiet room with low stimuli
- IVF and hydration
- Haldol, Thorazine, Benzo's prn
- Cardiac monitoring essential
- Nipride for hypertension
- Beta blocker prn
- \*\*\*Protect yourself and your staff\*\*\*



# Recent Bismarck Cases:

- 17 year old male and 23 year old female with heart attacks. Both heavy meth users.
- 19 year old male presents with a blood pressure of 280/180 and goes on to have a stroke.

# Recent Bismarck Cases:

- 18 year old with a tension pneumothorax suffers cardiopulmonary arrest while smoking crank.
- 20 year old female with hepatitis B, likely contracted by IV needle drug use.
- 24 year old male with bacterial endocarditis contracted from IV needle meth use.

# September 19, 2005

- 17-year-old female, presents to the Emergency Department with complaints of a vaginal discharge. She is pregnant and HIV positive. She has an STD.
- She has been HIV positive for 2 years, having contracted it by shared needles injecting meth.

# Meth's Chronic Effects...

- They become indistinguishable from paranoid schizophrenia with delusions, paranoia, and aggressive behavior.
- They tend to hallucinate more and are far more paranoid and aggressive.
- They are FAR more impulsive and FAR LESS inhibited than other drug users.

# Meth's Chronic Effects...

- Chronic central nervous system changes
- Damage to the heart, kidneys, liver, etc.
- Chronic skin problems
- Hair loss
- “Meth mouth”
  - General dental hygiene neglect
  - They tend not to brush or floss
  - Drink lots of soda pop
  - Eat poorly and take little in terms of healthy fluids

# What usually kills them?

- Strokes
- Cardiac arrhythmias
- Collateral trauma
- Suicide

# Labs

- Clandestine labs are easy to hide. Mobility is possible.
- Beakers are bubbling in rural America, perhaps in a building near you.

# Meth labs. Toxic Sites!

- DANGER: ether, toluene, lithium metal, anhydrous ammonia, hydrochloric acid and ethyl ether



# Just how addictive is meth?

*A drug like no other....*

# Meth Addiction:

As compared with alcohol and cocaine

- Take a group of 100 people.

Give them a drink of alcohol every day for 3 weeks:

- 8 out of 100 would become addicted to alcohol.

- Take a group of 100 people.

Give them meth or cocaine orally or as snuff every day for 3 weeks:

- 14 out of 100 would become addicted to meth or cocaine.

# Meth Addiction:

As compared with alcohol and cocaine

- Take a group of 100 people.  
Give them meth by smoking or injecting  
TWICE:
- 90 out of 100 would become addicted to meth.
- Meth addiction will last a minimum of 1 year.
- Take a meth addict who wants to quit and has been clean for 11 months, place them in a room with meth and 100% of recovering addicts will use it.

Crack vs. Crank. The addicts view...

“It’s a rocket high...much higher than coke, for much longer runs, at a fraction of the cost. One line buys a 6-12 hour buzz, an immediate lift. All this for about 25 bucks. A coke run like that will run 300 bucks.”

# What can you do to help?

Now more than ever, law enforcement needs our help.

# Thanks for your kind attention!

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